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SCIENCE

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ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS AND THE
PUBLIC¹

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MEMBERS of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers are pleased to refer to electrical engineering as a profession, and to the Institute itself as a professional society. When this occurs as a thoughtless repetition of fine-sounding words, it has little meaning, since mere repetition of an alleged truth does not make it a real truth, and it can be established as a real truth only by tracing it to some adequate foundation. But when those statements arise from a ripe understanding that the word profession means more than a mere organized vocation for earning one's bread, it has a high and commendable meaning. The word profession "implies professed attainments in special knowledge, as distinguished from mere skill; a practical dealing with affairs, as distinguished from mere study or investigation; and an application of such knowledge to uses for others, as a vocation, as distinguished from its pursuit for one's own purposes." This sets the professional man in a position which demands from him an attitude of service and of leadership. He must have a masterly knowledge, in addition to skill in a vocation. He must deal practically in the affairs or needs of men. His duties must be performed with a touch of disinterested spirit in addition to the vocational spirit of earning his livelihood. Such men have a duty to the public; and in the performance of that duty they must exert their influence on that thought and practise of the day

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to the Editor of SCIENCE, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

¹ President's address of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, delivered at the annual convention, Chicago, June 27, 1911.